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ABSTRACT

The College and Environment Scales Survey (CUES) was administered during the winter of 1973 to students who had completed at least four quarters at the University of California (UC) Irvine campus. This report indicated student perceptions of the atmosphere of the campus according to the resident or nonresident status of the student. Emphasis is placed on scholarship, awareness, community, practicality, propriety, campus morale, quality of teaching, and faculty student relationship. Results indicted that resident and nonresident students show more similarities than differences in their perceptions of UC Irvine. However, they do demonstrate significantly different perceptions in some measures of practicality, community, awareness, propriety, and campus morale. If the findings from the sample are projected to the 80 percent of Irvine's students who are nonresidents, several conclusions can be drawn. The nonresident students are less involved in student groups and activities, but they maintain a greater social and political awareness than do residents. Resident students have a more positive view of the administration and maintain a greater sense of community than do nonresidents. For the study of the whole UC Irvine campus, see HE 005 716. (HJM)

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A COMPARISON OF RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF UC IRVINE

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The recently published report, Student Perceptions of the Campus Atmosphere at UC Irvine,[1] provided a description of UC Irvine as perceived by students who had been in attendance for at least four quarters and had participated in the CUES study.[2] The study also provided national norms so that UCI could be compared to a reference group of one hundred four-year colleges and universities. In an effort to answer one of the more persistent questions about the student population, the data from the CUES study has been tabulated by the sub-groups "Resident" and "Non-Resident" so that the differences and similarities of these groups may be examined.

Findings of the sub-group analysis are reported within the framework of the seven scales of the major report with the same scoring feature of a plus sign to indicate positive agreement, a minus sign to indicate negative agreement, and the absence of a sign to indicate that a 2 to 1 consensus of opinion was not reached. The last column indicates the percentage of difference between the responses of the resident and non-resident student samples. Only statements that have proved to be statistically significant are reported here.[3]

1. Scholarship Scale

The statements of this scale describe an environment characterized by intellectuality and academic discipline.

Of the 20 statements in the scholarship scale, none elicited responses with significant differences between the resident and non-resident groups. The original study found positive agreement on this scale, and it can be presumed that the excellence of UC Irvine's academic programs and faculty is agreed upon by both segments of our student population.

2. Awareness Scale

This scale reflects a concern about, and emphasis upon, three sorts of meaning--personal, poetic, and political. An emphasis on self-understanding, reflectiveness, and identity suggests the search for personal meaning.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
32. Students are encouraged to take an active part in social reforms or political programs.	T	41	25-	16
37. A controversial speaker always stirs up a lot of student discussion.	T	34	18-	16

These two statements with the corresponding differences in response indicate that the non-resident student has a greater sense of awareness than the resident student. This finding suggests that programs aimed at political or controversial matters may generate interest in non-resident students and serve to heighten their involvement in campus activities.

3. Community Scale

The items in this scale describe a friendly, cohesive, group-oriented campus. There is a feeling of group welfare and group loyalty that encompasses the college as a whole.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
77. It's easy to get a group together for card games, singing, going to the movies, etc.	T	45	64	19

The sub-group analysis found no significant difference of opinion on 19 of the 20 statements comprising this scale. However, non-residents do seem to have a significantly different view of forming groups. This can be directly related to the fact that the non-resident group is quickly and widely dispersed when away from the campus. Efforts to promote group formation could be one of the major considerations in programming for the non-resident student.

4. Practicality Scale

This scale describes an environment characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits, and social activities. The environment, though structured, is not repressive because it responds to entrepreneurial activities and is generally characterized by good fun and school spirit.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
3. There is a recognized group of student leaders on this campus.	T	14-	25-	11
4. Frequent tests are given in most courses.	T	19-	35	16

Statements 3 and 4 show the only significant differences between sub-groups in the practicality scale. While the statement regarding frequent testing may be a function of courses of study, the matter of recognized student leaders is certainly a crucial one. While it must be remembered that this study is based on data gathered in the winter of 1972, it is clear that campus political, governmental and special interests groups are less active in the lives of non-residents than residents.

5. Propriety Scale

These items describe an environment that is polite and considerate. Caution and thoughtfulness are evident. Group standards of decorum are important. There is an absence of demonstrative, assertive, argumentative, risk-taking activities. In general, the campus atmosphere is mannerly, considerate, proper, and conventional.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
45. Students occasionally plot some sort of escapade or rebellion.	F	66+	49	17
46. Many students drive sport cars.	F	41	64	23

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
50. Students are conscientious about taking good care of school property.	T	46	31-	15
94. Students rarely get drunk and disorderly.	T	38	55	17

It is notable that the propriety scale contains more significant differences between residents and non-residents than any of the other scales. In contrast to the resident student sample, it would appear that non-residents perceive Irvine students as less rebellious and more conscientious about school property. These characteristics of non-resident perceptions can be viewed as one of the strengths of the group.

6. Campus Morale Scale

The items of this scale describe an environment characterized by acceptance of group norms, group cohesiveness, friendly assimilation into campus life, and, at the same time, a commitment to intellectual pursuits and freedom of expression.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
37. Controversial speakers stir a lot of student discussion.	T	34	18-	16
50. Students are conscientious about taking good care of school property.	T	46	31-	15

Here again, residents and non-residents show more similarities than differences in their perceptions. However, the two statements in which significant sub-group differences were found indicate that in these areas, the non-resident sample demonstrated a more positive perception than is evident in the resident sample.

7. Quality of Teaching and Faculty-Student Relationship Scale

These items define an atmosphere in which professors are perceived to be scholarly, to set high standards, to be clear, adaptive, and flexible. At the same time, this academic quality of teaching is fused with warmth, interest, and helpfulness towards students.

There were no significant differences on this scale between the perceptions of resident and non-resident student samples. This agreement of response when combined with the similar findings on the scholarship scale, makes a solid statement about the academic strengths of the Irvine campus. This characteristic provides a base of continuity from which programs can be developed to increase interaction, involvement, and a sense of community on campus.

Experimental Items

Of the sixty experimental statements included by Educational Testing Service in the 1969 edition of CUES, thirty-one were reported in the original study as indicating consensus of agreement. Three of these statements elicited significantly different sub-group responses, as did six statements which did not show consensus.

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
112. Students who don't make passing grades are quickly dropped from school.	T	41	20-	21
133. Many faculty members have worked overseas or frequently traveled to other countries.	T	74+	56	18
136. Many students are interested in joining the Peace Corps or are planning somehow to spend time in another part of the world.	T	46	22-	24
148. Most professors think of themselves as no different from other adults in the community.	T	37	53	16

Statement	Key	Non-Res. %	Res. %	Dif. %
151. There are students on many academic and administrative committees.	T	63	71+	8
154. There is much student interest and activity about social issues--such as civil rights, justice, peace.	T	37	24-	13
155. The administration is receptive and active in responding to student proposals for change.	T	28-	45	17
157. Massive disruptions, force, or violence by students would be unthinkable on this campus.	T	65	53	12
160. Due process considerations are expected by students who are accused of violating laws or college rules.	T	78+	62	16

These statements illustrate the non-resident group's keener sense of academic involvement and interest in social issues. Significant differences are also demonstrated by the more positive responses of non-residents to statements 157 and 160--massive disruption would be unthinkable and due process is expected by accused students.

Statements 151 and 155 deal with the student perceptions of the administration on the Irvine campus. Statement 155 indicates that the resident student is more aware of student interface with the University's committee structure than is the non-resident student. The large difference in response to the statement on administration receptivity to student proposals for change is one of the most pointed findings in this material. Of 160 CUES items, statement 155 deals most directly with the students' view of the administration. It should be noted that 28% agreement constitutes a negative consensus among non-residents. This negative finding in regard to the administration is in sharp contrast to the propriety and keen academic spirit displayed in the responses to various other CUES statements.

Conclusions

It is apparent that resident and non-resident students show more similarities than differences in their perceptions of UC Irvine. However, they do demonstrate significantly different perceptions in some measures of practicality, community, awareness, propriety, and campus morale. If the findings from the sample are projected to the 80% of Irvine's students who are non-residents, several conclusions can be drawn. The non-resident students are less involved in student groups and activities, but they maintain a greater social and political awareness than do residents. Non-residents have a greater sense of propriety and a more positive campus morale than do residents.

On the other hand, resident students have a more positive view of the administration and maintain a greater sense of community than do non-residents. However, it is significant that the CUES study showed no significant differences of opinion among the two sub-groups about the quality of teaching and scholarship on the campus. In fact, the study illustrates that the similarities among residents and non-residents are far greater than the differences.

Footnotes

[1]Melvin H. Bernstein, Student Perceptions of the Campus Atmosphere at UC Irvine, University of California, Irvine, Office of the Vice Chancellor - Student Affairs, July, 1973.

[2]A complete description of the CUES instrument and methodology employed in the study can be found in the above referenced report, pages 3-5.

[3]The appropriate statistical test for significance of the differences between the two groups is the chi square with .05 designated as the significance level. The .05 level of significance indicates that the chance of obtaining results for the sample that would not be true of the population would be 5 out of 100.